

Meditation.
(By the Editor.)

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Page 707
PR Vol 1906

com 707
Pm 1906

The preceding article on Prayer suggests a subject which received perhaps more attention in the earlier Christian Church than in the days when the social outcome of Christianity is apt to stand for Christianity itself. But it cannot be too often repeated that Christianity does not consist in good works, nor even in prayer, & other devout observances.

Christianity is not merely the following of Christ, but is perhaps chiefly the knowledge of Christ to be attained above all by constant devout contemplation of the Divine life. Hence the primary importance of Meditation to the Christian soul.

We cannot grow into the likeness of that which is unknown to us, and we cannot know except by that process of reflective contemplation which we name meditation.

It is told that Mr. Romanes once asked Darwin to advise him as to the best course to take in the pursuit of science. The answer of the older scientist was "Meditate." If meditation be the secret of success in the scientific, how much more must it be so in the spiritual life. It has been well said by Dr. A. A. Church, that the spiritual life must be nourished upon ideas, and work

merely emotionally stimulated.

We are transformed by the renewing of our minds, and with the renewed vigour imparted by "new thoughts of God" we are again enabled for the spiritual activities of prayer, praise, and godly endeavour.

If we assume that a vigorous Christian life must depend largely on devout meditation, the question arises, "How, & how early, may children be led to meditate?" All important things are simple, and this question of children's meditations is very simple indeed. The answer depends upon the conduct of the daily Bible ^{Lesson} ~~Lesson~~.

If mother or teacher indulge in much talk, the active principle in the child's mind which generates ideas, is deadened, as it were, drowned, & nothing happens beyond the pleased interest of the moment. But suppose the little lesson be conducted in something ⁱⁿ of this way:—

Suppose the lesson to be about Zacchaeus to children about six. The last lesson will have brought the children to the particular point in the history where the story of Zacchaeus occurs, and the teacher might begin by a few words about Jericho—the

trees by the road-side, & give a few words, and then
 the Teacher should read to the children the first
 10 verses of St. John XIX. with simplicity, reverence
 and a perfect delivery of every word. Hardly
 any comment will be necessary, a smile perhaps
 where the little Zacchaeus climbs the tree which may
 help to interpret to the children the kindly humour
 of the Master. The story ~~then~~ read, the children
 should be allowed to ask questions. They will
 probably want to know what is meant by a ~~publican~~
 'tax' 'a publican' 'a son of Abraham' & the
 like. Then the Teacher would ask ~~the~~ if they would
 like to hear the story again; they would probably
 say 'no' and then the class should be called upon
 to narrate the story, two or three children taking
 up the narrative. If the reading has been
 careful and ^{interpretative} ~~interpretative~~, it will be found that
 the children's narration will be almost verbatim.
 Then the teacher may allow herself in a few com-
 ments - just a word or two about the gracious-
 ness of ~~Jesus~~ ^{our Master}, & the great joy that came to Zacchaeus
 - because he wanted to see Jesus.

But all this is not meditation? No; but at the
 end, the mother might say "You awake sometimes

before Nurse comes. If you should do so tomorrow, you might tell this story to yourself, without leaving out a word." This is one of the pleasant things a child will love to do; and here we have meditation, not in its initial stage, but in perfection; ~~because~~ ^{act} this ~~habit~~ of mental narration has the curious effect of bringing ~~it~~ before the mind's eye, the persons & the actors ⁱⁿ the tale somewhat as they would appear in a ^{cinematograph} ~~narrator~~; and, with the progress & action of the figures, come into the mind the ideas proper to the story — you meditate in the fullest sense of the word.

This manner of meditation might be well be recommended to children of all ages — their own evening devotional reading forming the subject of their morning meditation, or vice versa, whichever is the more convenient.

About the period of confirmation, perhaps a fuller pondering of these things in their hearts may be recommended, according to their power & inclination for this sort of exercise. I add two or three short meditations which may suggest the sort of thing I have in view.

devout

I should like to add that this religious duty of meditation seems to me the most important part of the preparation of the ^{mother or other} teacher who would instruct children in the things of the Divine Life.